



Office of Foreign Missions

2000 ANNUAL REPORT



A Message from the Deputy Assistant Secretary

A year ago OFM published its first comprehensive annual report. It described our strategy to better meet the needs of our constituents: members of the foreign diplomatic service living in the United States, and the American public. That report was designed to reacquaint our audience with the key role OFM plays in the following areas:

*As advocate of U.S. and foreign diplomats
In defending the American public
In serving foreign diplomats*



Assistant Secretary David G. Carpenter and I believe we have accomplished our objective. One ambassador offered these comments: “I don’t believe I have ever written a congratulatory letter to anyone on their annual reports... OFM’s 1999 Report stands head and shoulders above most...”

The initiatives launched in 1999 made possible the OFM accomplishments achieved in the year 2000. These achievements are highlighted in this issue in four themes:

*Negotiations and Reciprocity Agreements
Partnership with Other Offices and Organizations
Continuing Outreach Effort
Strengthening the Organization*

We look ahead to increasing our capacity to serve our constituents’ needs and welcome your continuing comments and suggestions.

Theodore E. Strickler
Deputy Assistant Secretary

Table of Contents

A Message from the Deputy Assistant Secretary	
Negotiations and Reciprocity Agreements	2
Partnership with Other Offices and Organizations	6
Continuing Outreach Effort	8
Strengthening the Organization	12
How to Contact Us	19
A Global Venture: <i>Preparing the OFM Annual Report</i>	20



Negotiations and Reciprocity Agreements

Strategy Pays Off

The Office of Foreign Missions (OFM) aggressively pursued negotiations in the areas of Tax and Customs, Diplomatic Motor Vehicles, and Property. OFM's successes reduced U.S. Government costs at U.S. missions abroad and increased savings to the U.S. taxpayer. In advocating improved treatment for U.S. missions and their personnel abroad, OFM's negotiated agreements ultimately apply to foreign missions in the United States as well, providing a true "win-win" incentive.

Tax

Hawaii Tax Exemption Bill Signed into Law



Governor Cayetano holds signed House Bill 1691.

OFM played a leading role in support of diplomatic tax exemption legislation in the state of Hawaii. OFM's efforts culminated with the passage of House Bill 1691 that Hawaii Governor Benjamin Cayetano signed into law on April 26, 2000. The bill, which exempts all eligible foreign diplomatic and consular mission members from state taxes, resolved a 25-year-old impasse on the issue. Hawaii thus joined the 49 other U.S. states in observing our international treaty requirement to extend tax exemption to eligible foreign missions and their diplomatic and consular personnel.

OFM's involvement with this process energized in 1998, when the office stepped up its efforts to support tax exemption legislation. As momentum for a tax-exemption initiative slowly gathered support in the state legislature, OFM added resources to promote the measure's success. With the approval of the bill, OFM assisted Hawaii with its implementation and outreach activities, resulting in a smooth implementation of the program when it took effect on July 1, 2000.

Tax Agreement with the People's Republic of China

A major accomplishment in 2000, OFM successfully negotiated an agreement with the PRC that will provide tax relief for both countries' governments and their personnel. The agreement will also relieve contractors of both countries from paying taxes on purchases made on behalf of the mission for diplomatic and consular construction projects. Resolution of this latter issue was a particularly important requirement needed for the construction of the new U.S. chancery office building in Beijing. Similar Purchasing Agent Arrangements were concluded in 2000 with Angola, the Slovak Republic, and the United Arab Emirates.



OFM developed a website for survey responses.

VAT Tax Initiative Launched

Late in the year, OFM launched an initiative to determine the total amount of foreign taxes the Department of State and other U.S. Government agencies pay worldwide, and the amounts recovered. A value-added tax (VAT) survey, which was first tested in Brussels, London, Panama, Rome, and Tel Aviv, will be sent to all U.S. missions abroad in 2001.

The longstanding position of the Department has been that both sales tax and value-added tax are exempt under the terms of the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic and Consular Relations. The VAT survey is an important step in gathering accurate tax statistics for all government agencies under chief of mission authority.

OFM will use the data provided by the survey to refine its negotiation strategy on tax issues with host governments. It will also provide the means to monitor and quantify the success of tax reduction efforts.

Foreign Tax Reduction

Foreign taxes have an immense impact on the cost to U.S. taxpayers of operating our embassies and consulates. Foreign taxes on official purchases of goods and services can dramatically increase the cost of running American embassies and consulates. Taxes on personal purchases by U.S. Government employees substantially affect the cost of living overseas and ultimately increase the cost to the U.S. Government in the form of higher allowances.

Since its inception in 1982, OFM has been consistently proactive in bilateral tax-reciprocity negotiations. In 2000, OFM's efforts led to increased tax-exemption privileges for American missions and/or eligible members in several countries, including Australia, Benin, China, France, Gabon, Grenada, the Marshall Islands, Micronesia, Mongolia, the Philippines, Romania, Sri Lanka, Sweden, and Thailand. At the same time, OFM vigorously enforced reciprocity with missions in the United States. Because of an imbalance in tax treatment, OFM reduced the tax-exemption privileges of the missions and/or eligible members of several countries, including Bosnia-Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Lebanon, Macedonia, Moldova, Spain, and Zimbabwe.

Diplomatic Motor Vehicles

Currently, OFM enforces restrictive motor vehicle provisions for 115 countries. From January to December 2000, the motor vehicle reciprocity program assisted more than 50 U.S. missions in dealing with motor vehicle reciprocity issues. Restrictive motor vehicle practices encountered by our missions abroad included limitations on vehicle values, limitations on engine sizes, bans on ages and types of vehicles, cumbersome disposition procedures, and expensive taxes and customs duties on vehicle acquisitions.

To provide leverage in negotiations and to correct imbalances, OFM implemented, updated, or revised comprehensive motor vehicle policies for 12 countries: Austria, Bangladesh, Brazil, Colombia, Croatia, Finland, Germany, Pakistan, the Philippines, Egypt, Spain, and Switzerland. Significant improvements were made for U.S. personnel based on the implementation of reciprocity. OFM is also in the process of working with U.S. posts to revise or develop new policies for Chile, Ecuador, and Jordan.

In 2000, the motor vehicle reciprocity program distributed an in-depth motor vehicle reciprocity survey to 22 U.S. missions. The information gathered from the survey allowed OFM to update country-specific motor vehicle policies and more fully reciprocate the onerous vehicle fees, taxes, and restrictions imposed on U.S. missions and their personnel.

Customs

The customs program receives and processes applications from the foreign mission community (including entitled foreign military personnel) for the duty-free importation of shipments of personal goods and purchases from bonded warehouses. It does the same for all shipments imported by a foreign government and certain international public organizations. The customs division collects related data and analyzes the balance of privileges, striving for reciprocity. It also conducts a multi-year program which seeks to broaden the customs privileges of the administrative and technical (A&T) personnel at U.S. missions abroad.

The year 2000 saw a number of accomplishments for the customs division, particularly in the program to expand duty-free entry privileges for U.S. A&T staffs abroad. After prolonged negotiations, the following countries granted U.S. A&T staff time-unlimited duty-free entry privileges: Austria, Bosnia, Burma, The Congo Republic, The Holy See, Ireland, Moldova, Portugal, and Uzbekistan. In addition, the following countries raised the duty-free time limit for A&T staff: Panama, from 4 months to 12 (informal); Tunisia, from 6 months to 12; and Sweden, from 4 months to 12. Finally, the following countries agreed to respond to the U.S. initiative by granting the customs privileges of a diplomatic officer to all U.S. mission personnel: Azerbaijan, Bosnia, Mongolia, and Syria.

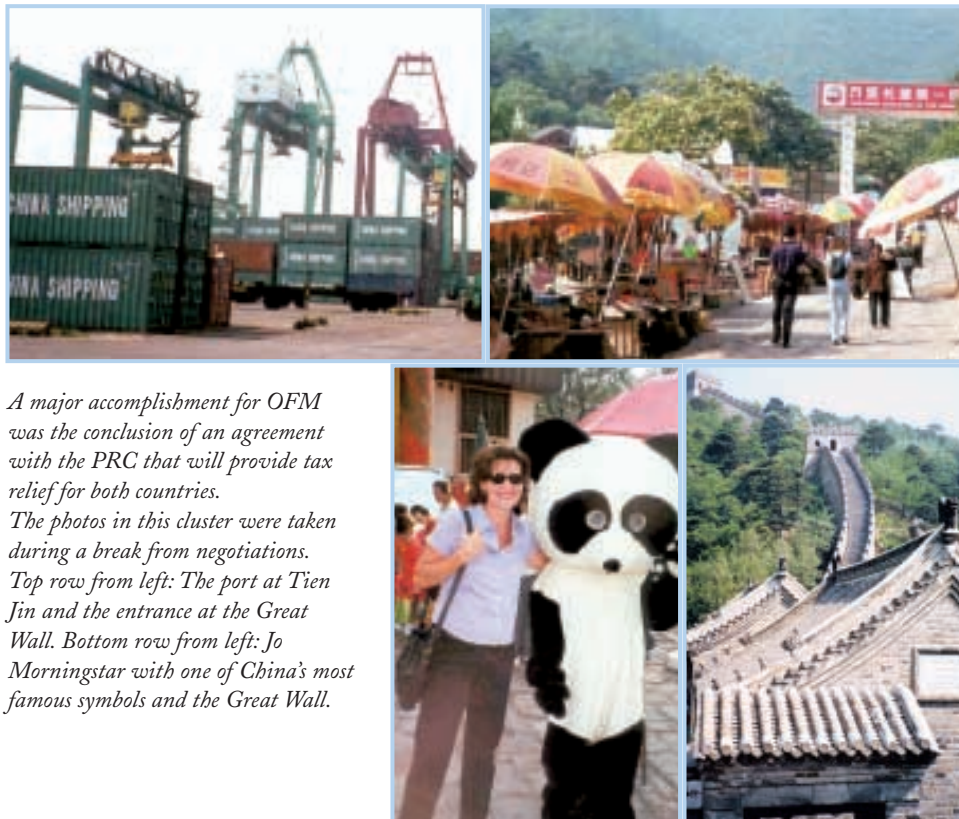
Property

In 2000, the OFM Property Office concluded several property and tax agreements with foreign governments, including Azerbaijan, Qatar, and Tajikistan.

After concluding an agreement in 1999, Azerbaijan purchased a property in the District of Columbia and, with the strong support of the Department, won a difficult zoning case to use the property as its new chancery.

The Embassy of Qatar for many years desired to buy property in the United States. Requests were repeatedly denied by OFM on the basis of reciprocity. In a significant move in 2000, the Qatar Government agreed to permit the U.S. Embassy in Doha to purchase buildings and land in fee simple, without restrictions. Now both countries enjoy the same long-term security and financial benefits of property ownership.

For a number of years, the Government of Tajikistan was interested in purchasing a property in the District of Columbia for use as its new chancery. OFM's agreement with Tajikistan, concluded in 2000, will allow the country to purchase property here in exchange for substantially equivalent property rights in Tajikistan.



A major accomplishment for OFM was the conclusion of an agreement with the PRC that will provide tax relief for both countries. The photos in this cluster were taken during a break from negotiations. Top row from left: The port at Tien Jin and the entrance at the Great Wall. Bottom row from left: Jo Morningstar with one of China's most famous symbols and the Great Wall.

Partnership with Other Offices and Organizations

Partnering with the District of Columbia to Address Local Property Issues

OFM made a major effort to accommodate local officials and private citizens regarding the presence of embassy chanceries in the District of Columbia. Concerns about the number of chanceries in residential neighborhoods, the condition of some of the properties and the process for filing complaints resulted in newspaper articles and meetings with Representative Norton, the Mayor's Office, and members of the City Council.

As a result of OFM's efforts, the Office of the Secretary in the Mayor's Office agreed to be a point of contact for citizens with questions or concerns about a particular embassy. OFM and the Mayor's Office are preparing a brochure that outlines the new procedure for distribution to the public.

OFM also initiated a change to traditional policy limiting the chanceries of foreign missions to the District of Columbia. The new policy, not yet fully implemented, seeks to allow chancery locations outside the District of Columbia in parts of Virginia and Maryland.



Deputy Assistant Secretary Theodore Strickler addresses foreign missions and their District of Columbia neighbors at Blair House and chats with guest (right photo).



Renovation of Macedonian Chancery

The Headlines Read:

Quiet Residential Neighborhood in a Diplomatic Dispute
The Washington Post, May 6, 2000

OFM worked extensively with District of Columbia officials, local residents, and the Government of Macedonia to get funds and attention directed to the renovation of the Macedonian property in the Sheridan-Kalorama neighborhood. The property, in poor condition, is considered a public eyesore. At OFM's insistence, the Government of Macedonia renewed its commitment to resolve the problem and expects to begin renovation work in 2001.



Resolution of Controversy: Xinhua News Agency (China)



OFM returned Yugoslavia's chancery once the United States established relations with the new state.

The Headlines Read:

China's Move of News Office Broke Law
The Washington Times, June 22, 2000

In June 2000, the Chinese News Corporation, Xinhua, purchased a building near the Pentagon. Xinhua did not seek prior OFM approval for this transaction as required by the Foreign Missions Act. OFM informed the Chinese Embassy that Xinhua would have to sell the building because OFM approval for the transaction would not be forthcoming. Xinhua subsequently complied and sold the building.

Return of the Yugoslavian Chancery

The Headlines Read:

U.S.- Yugoslavia to Resume Relations
The Washington Post, November 17, 2000

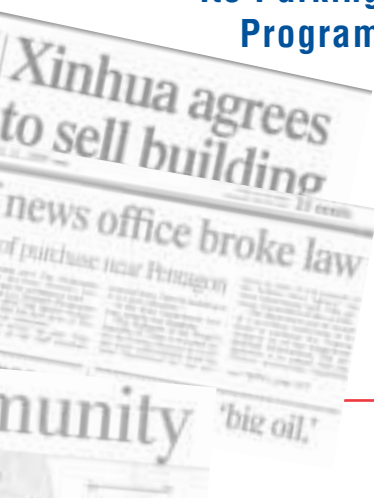
OFM's property section oversees the preservation and maintenance of diplomatic properties under custody of the Department of State. On November 17, 2000, the U.S. Government established relations with the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, recognizing it as an independent state. OFM subsequently returned Yugoslavia's former chancery, for which it had taken custodial responsibility on March 30, 1999.

Assisting the District of Columbia with Its Parking Program

OFM required the payment of \$31,000 to the District of Columbia in outstanding parking fines from the foreign diplomatic corps in 2000. Since 1995, OFM has helped the District of Columbia Government make significant improvements in enforcing its parking program with the diplomatic community.

OFM Reports to Congress

The Department of State Authorization Bill of December 1999 contained a requirement that the Department report to Congress those posts where A&T staff do not enjoy the same level of tax exemption, customs and motor vehicle privileges that are granted to other diplomats, and what the Department was doing to improve that treatment. In a report sent January 2001, Congress was notified of those countries that grant lower privileges to A&T staff.



Continuing Outreach Effort

Active Involvement in Outreach Programs

OFM sponsored and participated in several outreach programs to strengthen relationships between OFM and the foreign diplomatic community and U.S. public officials at the city, state, and federal government levels.

Local Outreach Events

OFM hosted a premier reception for ambassadors and their deputies from embassies in Washington, D.C. in October to introduce OFM's new Managing Director for Operations, Ronald B. Rabens, to the diplomatic community. The event, held at the Army and Navy Club, afforded OFM staff members an opportunity to chat with their "customers" in a relaxed setting.

OFM and the Office of Protocol hosted a reception on December 7th at Blair House for missions and their neighbors in the Sheridan-Kalorama neighborhood of the District of Columbia. The intent was to bring the parties together at a social occasion to help promote a dialogue on neighborhood issues. Attending the event were ambassadors, neighborhood residents, elected members of the District Council, and representatives of the Mayor's Office.

National Outreach Programs



National outreach at the International Chiefs of Police Convention in San Diego: OFM's Managing Director Ronald Rabens presents a police officer with "Guidance for Law Enforcement" as OFM staff look on.

In cooperation with other Department of State offices, OFM conducted a major nationwide information campaign with law enforcement, diplomatic and consular officials to ensure they clearly understand their respective responsibilities and the rights, privileges, and immunities of foreign diplomatic and consular personnel. This program stresses continuing efforts to improve consular notification and access of arrested foreign nationals to consular representatives.

During the year, often in partnership with the Department of State's Office of Protocol, Office of the Legal Advisor, and the Bureau of Diplomatic Security, OFM participated in seminars with law enforcement and consular representatives in cities across the United States. Meetings which reached a total of more than 1,000 police officers and hundreds of consular officials, were held in the following locales:

Cedar Grove, New Jersey (Metro New York area)	January
Tallahassee, Florida	February
Newtown, Pennsylvania (Metro Philadelphia area)	March

Salt Lake City, Utah
Las Vegas, Nevada
Honolulu, Hawaii
Baltimore, Maryland
Houston, Texas
San Diego, California
Atlanta Georgia

April
April
May
July
October
November
November

OFM will continue this program throughout 2001 to ensure the message about proper treatment of diplomats and consular officers is provided to the authorities charged with enforcing the law as it pertains to diplomats.

Outreach in State and Local Jurisdictions

OFM has an active outreach program which is devoted primarily to educating the law enforcement community about diplomatic/consular privileges and immunities. OFM assists jurisdictions, in coordination with the Bureau of Diplomatic Security and the Office of Protocol, in updating their operating procedures and general orders. This practice provides officers with the proper guidance for dealing with situations that involve persons who enjoy various types of immunity from jurisdiction.

Q. Did OFM require any diplomats to depart the U.S. for motor vehicle violations?

A. In 2000, two mission members were required to depart the U.S. for alcohol-related offenses: the sending State declined to waive immunity for a DWI involving personal injury to two persons in one case, and the other case involved a repeat DWI offender.

Program of Instruction for CALEA

In 2000, the Commission for Accreditation of Law Enforcement Agencies (CALEA) asked OFM's outreach officer to develop a program of instruction (POI) for supervisory personnel which would include proper procedures for handling all non-U.S. citizens. CALEA subsequently adopted OFM's POI as the national standard for police training in the United States. OFM also provided instructional support for such training at CALEA's semi-annual workshop in Reno, Nevada, in which representatives of approximately 500 jurisdictions participated.

Department of State Licensee Driving Offenses: Year 2000

Number of Cases	Type of Offense
26	Reckless driving resulting in a “must appear” summons
15	“Must appear” cases, usually in connection with an accident
19	Alcohol-related cases resulting in: <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ 14 one-year driving suspensions■ 3 court-imposed driving suspensions (45 days to 1 year)■ 2 expulsions from the U.S.

Outreach Officer Conducts Seminar for MADD National Workshop

In September, outreach officer Clay Hays conducted a seminar entitled “Immunity and Its Impact” in support of the Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD) national workshop. In addition, OFM provided direct training support to more than 70 police jurisdictions in Delaware, Washington, D.C., Maryland, Pennsylvania, and Virginia. Mr. Hays personally trained more than 4,000 police officers in 2000.

Compliance Visits in Southeastern United States

To improve communications with the consular community, OFM liaison teams made three compliance visits to southeastern cities of the United States as part of OFM Headquarters’ regional responsibility for that area. Early in the year, a five-member team visited Miami to address motor vehicle compliance, tax, and property issues. A four-member team visited Atlanta to address similar matters. In May, a visit to Puerto Rico produced results of considerable consequence. Ten countries have career consulates in Puerto Rico, all of which were interviewed regarding their problems and concerns (often the result of their distance from their embassies or the need for a more direct OFM presence in the region). The visit alerted several consulates to opportunities for budget savings through tax-exemption privileges. OFM also updated its property records, ensured compliance with its motor vehicle policies, and discovered one consulate whose members were not properly accredited to the United States. Prompt resolution of this last problem avoided any legal issues that could have arisen from unaccredited consular personnel notarizing official documents.

Ottawa Reciprocity Visit

A two-member team of Jacqueline Robinson, Director of Diplomatic Motor Vehicles, and Robert Hyams, Director of Tax and Customs, visited Ottawa, Canada in late 2000. The visit was for the purpose of consultations with Embassy officials and Canadian government officials on tax exemption and motor vehicle issues.

The Elian Gonzales Saga and OFM

The Headlines Read:

U.S. To Let Friends From Cuba Visit Elian

The Washington Post, April 26, 2000

OFM's Property/Travel Section administers the program that restricts the travel of diplomats from certain countries. Members of the Cuban Interests Section in Washington who wish to travel beyond 25 miles of Washington must notify OFM three days prior to departure, with travel less than three days requiring advance approval from OFM. When Elian was taken to the Wye Plantation in Maryland to await the outcome of his father's request to return with him to Cuba, diplomats from the Cuban Interests Section filed nearly daily requests with OFM to travel there to help Elian, his family and classmates. The constant requests required great coordination by OFM with other Department offices and other interested federal agencies to ensure that the needs of the family were balanced with the national security interests of the United States.

OFM's Newsletter: An Important Extension of Outreach

OFM's newsletter, *Consultations*, observed a successful first year of quarterly publication. To better inform and educate the foreign diplomatic community, all honorary consuls in the U.S. were added to the distribution. More than 3,000 copies are distributed each quarter to the foreign diplomatic community and U.S. foreign service posts abroad.



Strengthening the Organization

Strategies for Better Performance

OFM is actively engaged in shaping the organization to serve our customers, both foreign and domestic.

Better Customer Service through Organizational Merger



The Program Support team is a result of a merger of OFM's Program Support staff and the Office of Protocol's Production Unit. The merger represents the first phase to streamline the process by which OFM offers benefits and services to the foreign mission community.

The Office of Protocol's Production Unit merged with OFM's Program Support Unit on October 1, 2000. With this action, the Protocol functions of notification and termination of status of foreign diplomatic community members transferred to OFM. The merger is the first phase in a comprehensive effort to streamline the process by which OFM offers benefits and services. The merger brought eight people from the Office of Protocol to the OFM family. Program Support produces U.S. Department of State

documents (driver licenses, motor vehicle registrations and titles, tax exemption cards, identification cards) and issues vehicle license plates.

Management

The Office of Foreign Missions continued in 2000 to improve customer services in terms of better labor and skill utilization, as well as the timeliness and quality of the work delivered to OFM "customers." The increased productivity and the quality of work provided to the diplomatic community improved measurably due, in part, to new technology initiatives. Results of on-going management studies and the findings and recommendations from Mitretek, Inc., and PricewaterhouseCoopers were also instrumental in helping to improve operations. Activity Based Cost data and other assessments were used to recommend new management initiatives to improve customer services by relocating resources to meet new mission objectives in an environment of a growing workload and static funding. Finally, after nearly 17 years of consideration, OFM received Department funding to open a sixth regional office in Miami, Florida, to better serve those consulates located in the mid-Atlantic and southeastern United States.



OFM Co-op Christian Brittle stands in front of the Forbidden City in China. He played a support role for the property negotiation team.

Cooperative Education Students (Co-op)

OFM recognizes the talent and contributions of recent and present cooperative education students it has been privileged to mentor.

Laura Goss, OFM's first Co-op graduated and joined the Department of State as a Civil Service employee with the U.S. Passport Agency in Boston, Massachusetts.

Christian Brittle, OFM's 2000 Co-op, a graduate student in International Studies at American University, served as an assistant to the Deputy Assistant Secretary and accompanied him to Beijing with the U.S. negotiation team. Mr. Brittle expects to receive a Master's Degree in International Studies this summer and then join the Federal Government.

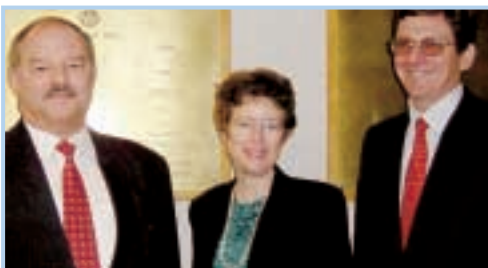
Sharon Grau, also a graduate student at American University, is studying International Environmental Policy, and joined OFM as its 2001 Co-op student. Sharon is presently attending consular training at the National Foreign Affairs Training Center.



Student mentoring advocate Deputy Assistant Secretary Theodore Strickler engages Presidential Management Intern Gustav Goger in the functions of a diplomatic reception.

Presidential Management Intern (PMI)

Gustav Goger earned a Master of Public Administration degree from the University of Chicago and joined OFM in 1999 as a Presidential Management Intern. Among other responsibilities, he served as Executive Secretary in a Departmental top-to-bottom security initiative. He recently passed the Foreign Service examination and will soon join the Department as a Foreign Service Officer.



Jean Hartung (center) and Boyd Doty (left), Department of State students at the Air War College, appear with Director General for Personnel Marc Grossman (right) on the occasion of his visit as guest speaker at the Air War College.

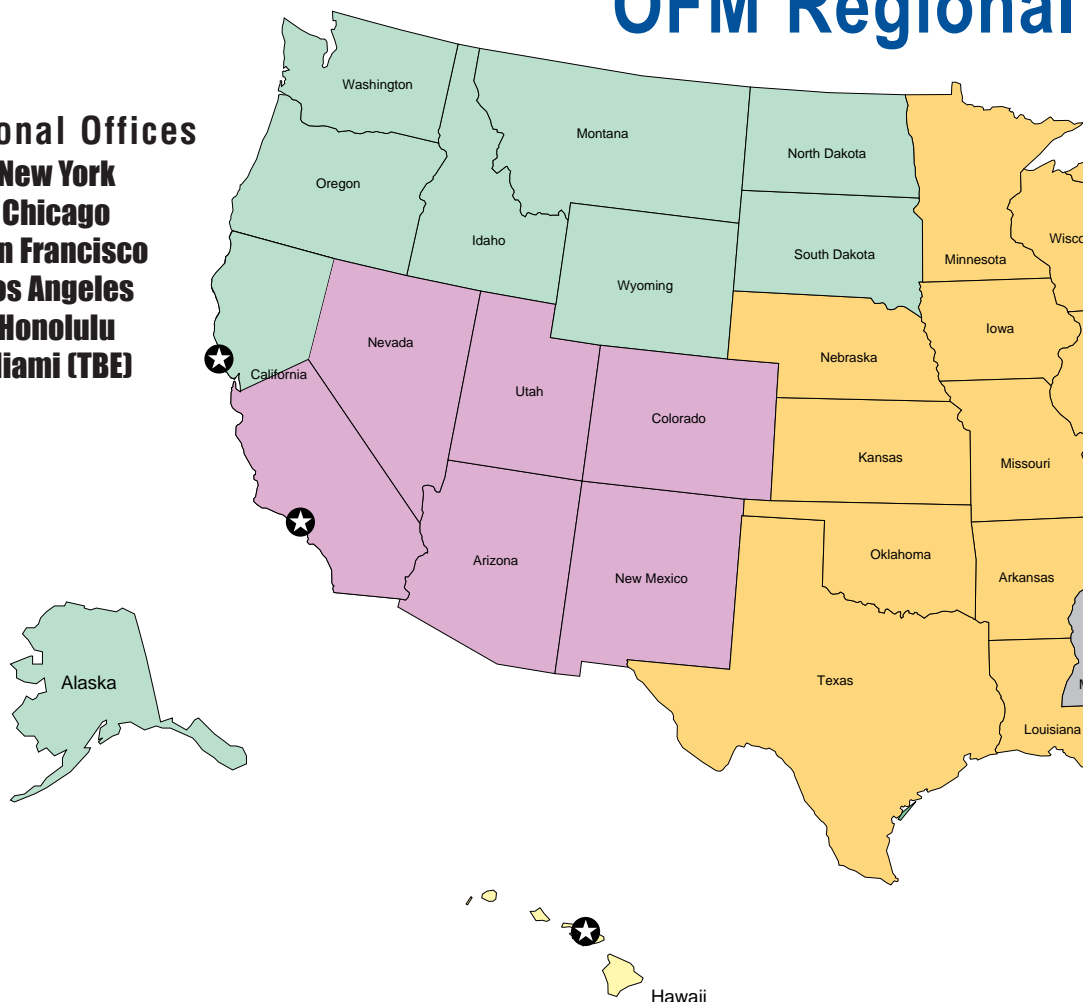
Director of Administration Selected for Academic Studies

Jean Hartung, OFM's Administrative Director, is one of two Department of State students studying at the Air War College (AWC) in the 2000/2001 academic year. Each year, the U.S. Air Force invites the U.S. Department of State to send several State employees to the AWC's resident academic program. The AWC is the Air Force's senior professional military school, annually preparing 250 resident and more than 3,000 non-resident students from all U.S. military

OFM Regional

★ Regional Offices

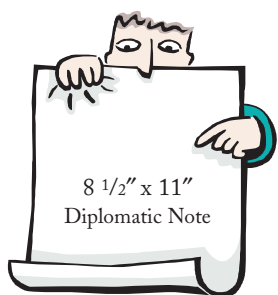
New York
Chicago
San Francisco
Los Angeles
Honolulu
Miami (TBE)



services, federal agencies, and 40 other nations to lead in the strategic environment, emphasizing joint operations, the use of air and space power in support of national security, and how to apply that learning in the international arena.

Diplomatic Note Initiative

Effective February 1, 2001, United States diplomatic notes will be prepared on standard (8 1/2" x 11") rather than legal-size (8 1/2" x 13") paper stock. The Office of Foreign Missions initiated the switch to the new paper size. Two new types of stationery have been designed, one for first-person diplomatic notes from the Department only and a second for third-person notes. Both are imprinted with the words "Diplomatic Note" centered at the bottom of the page.



Offices



OFM's Regional Offices: Indispensable Service

OFM operates regional offices in New York, Chicago, San Francisco, Los Angeles, and Honolulu. In addition, plans are under way to open a regional office in Miami in 2001 (see page 16). Regional offices are often viewed by diplomats outside the Washington, D.C., area as the de facto State Department. OFM's five regional offices assist foreign mission personnel, advise and assist city and state officers on foreign mission privileges, immunities, and responsibilities, and either produce or facilitate the processing of tax exemption and motor vehicle documents. Other activities include customs clearance requests and coordination of property and travel issues with OFM headquarters. Each regional office responds to numerous requests during the year, such as the events presented below.

A consular officer called the Los Angeles Regional Director to ask for assistance in obtaining a list of nationals from his country incarcerated in California state and federal prisons. California law prohibited the Department of Corrections from providing that information to the consulate, but the code did allow its release to the Department of State. The Regional Director was therefore able to provide a list of incarcerated nationals.

In New York City, the Regional Director met with a deputy consul general accused of a DWI offense and abusive language, along with certain city officials and police officers involved in the case. The deputy consul general apologized for anything he might have said that a city commissioner found offensive. The Regional Director interceded to get the deputy director's vehicle returned to the consulate, and the deputy consul general agreed to get in touch with his attorney to see about the possibility of a plea bargain.

A consular officer posted in Texas called the Chicago Regional Office for assistance with bringing a nanny into the U.S. to care for his newborn baby. The nanny had worked for his family in the past but, when she went to the U.S. embassy to apply for an entry visa, she was turned down. The Chicago Regional Director called the U.S. embassy in the country and spoke with them concerning the case. The embassy reviewed the case again and was able to issue the visa to the nanny after discovering an error in the first review. The consul was very happy and relieved he could have a nanny he trusted, and the U.S. embassy appreciated that the matter had been brought to their attention.

In San Francisco, the U.S. Park Police notified the San Francisco Regional Director of the drowning of a foreign national that had occurred the previous week. The victim was identified as a 13-year-old male who was having his photograph taken with 7 other individuals when a wave crashed over them and carried the victim out to sea. The victim's aunt (with whom he was residing) advised the Park Police that his parents were having difficulty obtaining visas. The San Francisco Regional Director contacted the consular visa unit chief, who responded immediately that he had been in contact with the parents and would be issuing their visas without delay.

The Los Angeles mayor's office called the Los Angeles Regional Director to ask for assistance with a request from a large foreign city to open an investment office in the United States. The Regional Director informed the caller that the embassy needed to contact the Office of Protocol to discuss the issue and then follow up with a diplomatic note to OFM requesting permission to establish such an office. The Regional Director subsequently placed calls to contacts in the Office of Protocol and OFM to give them a "heads up."

Miami Regional Office Set to Open in 2001

OFM sought funding in 2000 to open a regional office in Miami to improve foreign missions' compliance with Department of State regulations and procedures, and to improve OFM's services in the mid-Atlantic and southeastern U.S. to the foreign missions. With funding available, congressional approval is the last remaining step before the office can be established.

New Space for Honolulu Regional Office

When the Honolulu Passport Agency moved to a new location, OFM's Honolulu Regional Office acquired space to call its own. Through a partnering arrangement with the Bureau of Consular Affairs, the Director of the Passport Office is also Director of OFM's Honolulu Regional Office.



*OFM's Honolulu Regional Office
acquires new office space.*

Technology Technology Transformation

OFM's technology transformation will better serve its customer base.



OFM continues to strive to be a model of electronic government. As the Internet establishes itself as the commercial and governmental center of the future, OFM will be in a position to better serve its constituency and customer base. A technology transformation is under way that is changing the way OFM provides its panoply of services to the diplomatic community. OFM continues to modernize its hardware

and software tools, installing a state-of-the-art data center designed to support the mission of OFM in the near future. OFM also survived the much-hyped millennium bug by ensuring that its critical hardware and software infrastructures were up to date.

Honolulu Passport Agency Director and OFM Regional Director "Sam" Finn (third from right) hosts the new office space ribbon-cutting ceremony. Also participating are (from left) Georgia Rogers, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Passport Services; Jill Johnson, Special Assistant to the Assistant Secretary for Consular Affairs; Steven Mullen, Assistant Regional Director, Honolulu Passport Agency; Sam Finn; Ambassador Mary Ryan, Assistant Secretary of State for Consular Affairs; and Richard Jaworski, former OFM Office Director.

Web Site Enhancements

OFM enhanced both its office and Department of State Web sites to provide OFM employees access to information such as country reports, country fact sheets, and reciprocity information. The OFM Web site also provides easy access to sources of information throughout the Department, with quick links to agency-wide Web sites and a powerful search engine that quickly sorts information in response to English language queries.

Team Technology Tools

Access to information alone cannot ensure that OFM will be able to meet the challenges of the future. The quality of the data, combined with the ability to effectively gather, evaluate, and share information, is critical. Teamwork and collaboration are essential to meet the challenges that OFM will face. During the past year, OFM investigated technologies that support collaboration and the team-centric model. These technologies include voice and video teleconferencing, video to the desktop, document sharing, and enhanced electronic messaging.



New Web-based Application

Accurate and up-to-date information is essential to effective decision making. To ensure that data gathered by OFM provides a strong basis for the decision-making process, OFM has embarked on a program to improve data collection. During the past year, OFM created a stand-alone Web-based application that will allow its clientele to easily and accurately complete forms for OFM services. This new procedure will reduce the incidence of data entry errors. In the future, this application will be incorporated into an Internet-based Web page that will allow OFM's clientele to submit all applications electronically, thus further reducing the chance for data entry errors.

New Database System

OFM's replacement for its flagship information database system, the Office of Foreign Missions Information System (OFMIS), is nearing completion, with deployment scheduled for May 2001. This system, TOMIS (The OFM Management Information System), will considerably enhance the ability of OFM to gather and analyze data, as well as streamline administrative processes and improve the quality of the data. The new system also is the keystone upon which OFM will continue to build, utilizing technologies such as digital imaging, workflow processing, and management decision support processes.

TOMIS is designed to meet changing OFM requirements. OFM used application design and development tools that will allow the system to meet this goal. These tools will allow OFM to quickly modify the system to address changes in OFM requirements. They also allow OFM to easily incorporate new technologies into the system and forge links to other Department systems, further enhancing the effectiveness of the system.

Optimum Staff Training

The best efforts to modernize hardware and software tools also require a staff trained to use them. An integral part of OFM's technology modernization plan, therefore, is training. During the past year, OFM modernized its on-site training facility and broadened the selection of training materials to ensure that employees are able to develop the skills necessary not only for OFM systems, but also throughout the Department, the government, and the private sector.

How to Contact Us

Deputy Assistant Secretary

Theodore Strickler
(202) 647-3417

Managing Director for Operations

Ronald Rabens
(202) 895-3500

Senior Advisor

Thomas E. Burns, Jr.
(202) 647-3516

Legal Counsel

Ronald Mlotek
(202) 895-3501

Office of Property and Travel Programs

Richard Massey
(202) 647-4554

Diplomatic Motor Vehicle Program

Jacqueline Robinson
(202) 895-3532

Tax and Customs Programs

Robert Hyams
(202) 895-3545

Systems Director

Robert Mattox
(202) 895-3579

Administrative Director

Ed Luna
(202) 895-3511

New York Regional Office

Jim Bond
(212) 826-4500

Chicago Regional Office

Denise Duclon
(312) 353-5762

Los Angeles Regional Office

Evan Press
(310) 235-6292

San Francisco Regional Office

Leroy Dal Porto
(415) 744-2910

Honolulu Regional Office

Sam Finn
(808) 522

A Global Venture: *Preparing the OFM Annual Report*

OFM staff draft highlights for the *2000 Annual Report* at two locations:



Harry S. Truman Main State Building

*State Annex 33, International Chancery Center,
located at the corner of Connecticut Avenue and
Van Ness Street.*



*The development of the report
is facilitated by OFM editor
Kathy Nagle.*



Regional Printing Center Manila

*Layout and printing of the report is handled by the
staff of the Regional Printing Center, Manila.*